



photo by Tom Skinner

Massachusetts' Maritime Tradition and Seafaring Future

By Ellen Roy Herzfelder, Secretary of Environmental Affairs

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is well known for its coastal natural resources, from expanses of white sandy beaches and rock-bound shores, to picturesque island communities, to quaint harbors and inlets.

However, that is only half the story. At the very heart of this state—originating from the earliest of colonial days—is a maritime tradition based on some of the finest natural harbors to be found anywhere. The movement of goods and services through these harbors was the sustenance and strength of a new nation about 226 years ago. Today, maritime commerce remains an integral part of the economic structure of Massachusetts.

We have seen much change since those early days. Vessels are faster, bigger, deeper, and come and go from every corner of the earth, with

cargo movements expected to triple over the next 20 years. The Port of Boston now has direct calls by large container vessels from Europe and the Far East, 14 million tons of bulk cargo enter its waters each year, and last year, 250,000 cruise passengers and over 100,000 automobiles came across its docks. The Port of Boston alone is estimated to have an \$8 billion impact on the economy producing more than 9,000 direct jobs.

As a fishing port, New Bedford often exceeds all other U.S. ports in the value of seafood landings (landings that translate into cargo shipped worldwide). Similarly, Gloucester ships packed herring to Europe and the Near East; while lumber, steel, and salt products enter and leave the port of Fall River. The “Port of Massachusetts,” the combination of our five largest ports—Fall River, New Bedford, Boston, Salem, and Gloucester—offers the global marketplace

unique and special opportunities to engage the economic strengths of the Commonwealth and the region.

To take full advantage of these resources in the expanding global economies of the 21st Century, the Commonwealth will work with the public, federal agencies, representatives of the shipping and fishing industries, and local officials from each of these ports to set the agenda for port planning and development. With Governor Mitt Romney’s restructuring of state government, transportation, the environment, and community development are directly coordinated through the Governor’s Office, ensuring better delivery of services to our maritime constituents. Coupled with our recently announced Ocean Management Initiative, we are poised to enter a new age of sustainable maritime activity.

For monthly updates on the Ocean Management Initiative, check out CZ-Mail at www.mass.gov/czm/czmail.



*Packing mackerel
on the Boston Fish
Pier, 1938.*